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Police investigates fraud in Engineering Revalidations

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On Wednesday there will be a preliminary hearing against the woman detained for recording and transmitting questions from the test.

MAYAGUEZ - For the past two years, the revalidation examination administered to engineering applicants in Puerto Rico, the United States and Canada has been recorded with sophisticated recording and transmitting equipment.

The investigators in the case, which has been reported in the midst of the scandal regarding irregularities in the revalidations from the Medical Examining Board, do not know how many people bought the recorded tests.

"God knows how many engineers are working out there, making my house, your house, anybody's house, without truly having the knowledge necessary to practice that profession", stated agent Victor Perez-Rivera, from the Criminal Investigation Corp (CIC) in Mayaguez, who investigates the case together with prosecutor Pablo Colon.

According to the information obtained by *El Nuevo Dia*, on October 27, 2006, the revalidation exam was administered at the U.P.R. Mayaguez Campus (*RUM*) to tens of graduates from different institutions.

One of the people in charge of overseeing the group was Mauricio A. Pagan-Zapata, who observed the strange behavior of 44 year-old Betzaida Cameron-Ortiz, who was taking the test.

She would run her hand over the paper in a continuous and organized manner, and every time that he would look at her she would look away. She would lean to the side and she would sort of talk to herself', stated the investigating agent.

Pagan-Zapata contacted Dr. Lila J. Cuero-Muñoz, from Professional Credencial (sic) Service, in charge of administering the exam, to inform her about his suspicions, and she gave him instructions to intervene at the conclusion of the test, which is the same one administered in the United States and Canada.

Upon concluding the exam, Cameron-Ortiz was confronted and she turned over the equipment, which included a mini-antenna with the capacity to transmit the recorded information to a distance of one mile, a camera and a recorder. On the inside of her jacket there were countless pockets specially created to store the attachments.

The antenna is a sign that the woman was not working alone and that there was one or more persons collecting the questions from the exam on some computer located outside the campus, explained Perez-Rivera.

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"When we took the evidence to the Forensic Science Institute they found that the same disc contained the exam copied last year, all of the questions from that exam. It is not known how many years they have been recording the exam. We are sure that there are other people involved and possibly an organization", he added.

The accused, who has taken the revalidation exam on several occasions, has not wanted to implicate anyone else.

He emphasized that part of the investigation which they conduct revolves around how many people may have purchased the questions, but he acknowledged that it will not be easy.

After the intervention in October, Cameron-Ortiz received a summons from the Mayaguez District Attorney's Office, but she fled to the United States, where she was later arrested and extradited to Puerto Rico.

This past April 2, Judge Margarita Gautier, from the Mayaguez Judicial Center, found cause for her arrest for two counts of aggravated illegal misappropriation and two of fraud, reported prosecutor Jose Frank Nazario.

The judge imposed bail in the amount of \$400,000, which was paid. The preliminary hearing against the woman was scheduled for this Wednesday.

Perez-Rivera explained that all of the exercises included in the test come from a bank of questions.

A different exam is made every year, but using the same bank of questions.

If you copy the questions during two or three years, you have the majority of the questions that are used in the different revalidation tests and the people can prepare in advance", said the agent.

(Photo caption; "Cameron-Ortiz fled to the United States after receiving a judicial summons, and she was arrested there and returned to the Island. She faces two counts of illegal misappropriation and two of fraud.")

<p>-CERTIFIED-</p> <p>To be a correct translation prepared by:</p> <p>JAIME D. SOTOMAYOR-PABON</p> <p><u>06/18/07</u></p> <p>Certified Court Interpreter Administrative Office of the United States Courts</p>
